



Annette Iafallo, Mayor
City of Lackawanna

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May 19, 2021

Dear Lackawanna Residents,

I'm thrilled to announce that the Lackawanna City Council has unanimously approved my \$29.6 million dollar budget proposal for the 2021-22 fiscal year which starts on August 1. ***This budget features a unified city tax rate of \$16.75 per thousand; a decrease of \$0.40 per thousand from the \$17.15 per thousand rate in the current year's budget. The garbage fee will once again remain unchanged at \$254 per unit.***

We were again able to lower the tax rate for property owners for the second year in a row by practicing prudent expense management during the Covid-19 pandemic, realizing an increase of nearly 8% in other revenues – which were originally forecast to be lower due to the pandemic – and the use of \$1.5 million dollars of general fund balance to benefit Lackawanna taxpayers.

I want to thank the City Council for their cooperation and support, as this reflects the second year in a row my budget proposal was passed without changes. I'd also like to thank each city department and division head who worked together with me and the Comptroller to identify essential items necessary for enhancing the delivery of city services and providing safe and modern working environments for our employees, to include:

- The hiring of three new police recruits, along with investing in two new police vehicles to replace aging fleet, additional officer training and an improved interview room,
- The hiring of five new firefighters- contingent upon receipt of a SAFER Grant - along with investing in new air tank equipment to replace older inefficient models and,
- The purchase of a new dump truck for the DPW to replace a fully depreciated and aging vehicle.

The budget also reflects the successful resolution of two prolonged labor negotiations with police and DPW unions and anticipates successful resolution of a third with the fire department union.

Most importantly, this budget begins the process of delivering on my administration's promise of tax relief for property owners. As I've said previously, it will take time to rebuild our business base to the point where significant tax benefits can be realized. But we're moving in the right direction.

The unified rate of \$16.75 per thousand which takes effect on August 1 will result in a modest property tax reduction of \$60 on a property with an appraised value of \$150,000. And as the over \$74 million dollars in new development projects launched in 2020 and 2021 begin generating incrementally higher tax revenues – starting from day one over the life of their respective PILOT agreements - even more tax benefits will be possible in the coming years. And we're moving ahead with plans to add even more projects to this pipeline.

I want to thank everyone in the community for their feedback this past year. We've made a lot of changes in a short period of time, some very difficult and unpopular. But slowly the benefits are starting to come. And there's more ahead.

As always, please stay safe and God bless.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Quetta Taffalo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the upper left area of the page, below the main body of text.